

Recovery – Consumer Protection Tips

Price controls are not normally permitted in the State of Florida. However, in the event of a state of emergency being declared by the Governor of the State, the Mayor of Miami-Dade County, the Board of County Commissioners, the County Manager, or the Director of the Miami-Dade Police Department, both state law and county ordinance prohibit price gouging.

In such a situation, regulations come into effect, which ban retailers from charging unconscionable prices for essential goods or services. An "unconscionable price" is determined by comparing the price asked during an emergency, with what was charged for the same commodity during the preceding 30-day period.

The regulations cover categories of commodities such as food, medicines, personal hygiene products, chemicals, petroleum products, lumber and household supplies, as well as the provision of services and the rental of any equipment, dwelling unit or self-storage facility likely to be in increased demand in a period of emergency.

During an emergency price gouging complaints can be made to CSD Consumer Hotline at (305) 375-3677, the State Attorney General's hotline at (800) 646-0444, or to special price gouging hotlines which will be established.

Penalties for price gouging range from a fine of \$500 to imprisonment of up to 60 days, or both.

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